

INTRODUCTION OF THE PERSONAL
HEALTH INVESTMENT TODAY ACT**HON. JERRY WELLER**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Madam Speaker, as we move through the 21st Century, we are constantly facing new challenges to our public welfare that we had not previously seen.

A more recent challenge that has surfaced is the relative epidemic of obesity, and the onset of disease and health care difficulties resulting from lack of a healthy lifestyle.

I think that many agree with me that a key component of living a healthy productive life is found through regular exercise and the benefits that it brings.

The Department of Health and Human Services predicts that spending on healthcare will consume 20 percent of the nation's gross domestic product by 2015 if current trends hold true.

At this rate of growth, America is on track to spend roughly \$4 trillion on healthcare within the next ten years. This level of spending for medical treatment is unsustainable and can only be curbed through efforts to prevent disease before treatment is necessary.

Given the healthcare crisis we are facing in this country today, I strongly believe that creative solutions are necessary to improve the nation's fitness levels.

This need for creative solutions is why I am reintroducing the The Personal Health Investment Today (PHIT) Bill, (H.R. 5479 in the 109th Congress).

This bill allows for expenditures for exercise and physical activity, such as health club memberships, some exercise equipment, and sports programs, to be payable out of various tax-favored investment accounts: flexible spending accounts (FSAs), health savings accounts (HSAs), medical savings accounts (MSAs) and/or medical reimbursement arrangements, up to \$1,000.

If enacted, PHIT would give parents the opportunity to pay for their children's soccer league fees out of their HSAs. They could join a fitness center and pay for the membership fees with pretax dollars or they could purchase a home gym to help them fight the onset of obesity, a primary risk factor for developing anyone of several chronic diseases which are currently fueling the frightening increase in our national healthcare expenditure.

Depending upon a consumer's individual income tax bracket, the PHIT initiative could help Americans save 25–30 percent on their exercise costs.

Health experts agree that regular physical activity substantially reduces the risk and symptoms of numerous diseases and medical conditions and is associated with fewer hospitalizations, physicians' visits, and medications, resulting in lower healthcare costs.

The PHIT tax incentive represents an important step to induce more people to get the levels of exercise they need to improve their level of fitness and help lower healthcare costs for all Americans, which is why I am proud to reintroduce this bill.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CHARLIE NORWOOD

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. NORWOOD. Madam Speaker, on roll call no. 7; On adoption of Title 2 of the Resolution. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

RECOGNIZING MARTHA C. STONUM

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Martha C. Stonum of Lawson, Missouri. Martha will celebrate her 100th birthday on January 31, 2007, and it is my privilege to offer her my warmest regards on achieving this important milestone.

Mrs. Stonum was born in Lathrop, Missouri where she began her education in a one-room school house, before ultimately attending William Jewell College. Mrs. Stonum is a loving mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother to two sons, one step son, four grandchildren, two step grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren, three step great-grandchildren, and one step great-great-grandchild. Mrs. Stonum is still an active member of her community, visiting her beauty shop and church weekly.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in recognizing Martha C. Stonum. It is an honor to represent her in the United States Congress, and I wish her all the best for many more birthdays in the future.

INTRODUCTION OF THE NATIONAL
BOARD-CERTIFIED TEACHERS IN
LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS ACT**HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce the National Board-Certified Teachers in Low-Performing Schools Act of 2007.

I have been pro-active in promoting professional teaching standards throughout my public service and strongly believe certification is more important now than ever.

We know that schools in the United States are falling behind in the core subject areas of math and the sciences. Teacher certification is a step toward gaining ground against other nations as well as working to close the Achievement Gap here in our own nation.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards provides America's teachers with high-quality training and professional certification. Research shows the benefits of this advanced credential.

Students of certified teachers showed year-end testing improvements averaging 7 to 15 percent more than students learning from non-certified teachers.

Another study by the University of North Carolina found that the depth of learning for

students was greater in the classrooms of certified teachers. That is, these students show greater cognitive gains overall than students of non-certified teachers.

I am convinced we must do more to encourage our dedicated teachers who are already in the classrooms.

My legislation authorizes a pilot program to give teachers with certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards a \$5,000 annual stipend when they teach in a low-income school or a school that is underperforming.

Professional teaching certification would improve education in the United States and help make our nation competitive and I am pleased for the opportunity to promote this certification in Congress.

Madam Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to introduce the legislation today.

INTRODUCTION OF THE COMBAT
MILITARY MEDICALLY RETIRED
VETERANS ACT**HON. JERRY WELLER**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 5, 2007

Mr. WELLER of Illinois. Madam Speaker, we owe our veterans a great debt of gratitude. Their sacrifices have protected the democratic ideals that are the foundation of our country, and their heroism continues to be an example for all Americans.

Perhaps now, more than any time in recent history, it is important to remember that our Nation has remained strong because of those who have fought and died for our country. By answering the call of duty and risking their lives to protect their fellow citizens, these patriots have inspired us with their courage, compassion, and dedication.

Many of these brave men and women become severely wounded due to combat related injuries, and are forced to retire as physically unfit to perform his or her duties. Once forced out of the service, many are unable to find gainful employment due to their injuries while at the same time being rated at less than their actual disability rate by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). They have little to fall back on and deserve better for their sacrifice.

That is why I am reintroducing the Combat Military Medically Retired Veterans Act, (H.R. 995 in the 109th Congress), which allows combat military medically retired veterans who received the Purple Heart to collect their pro-rated military retirement pay.

This legislation differs from the current concurrent receipt benefit because it exempts combat military medically retired veterans from the current 20-year service requirement. The benefit will match their time of service.

The Congressional Budget Office scored my bill at \$496 million over ten years, certainly a small price to pay for those who have sacrificed so much for our great nation.

I am proud to state that my bill has been endorsed by the American G.I. Forum of the United States; American Legion, Department of Illinois; American Legion, National Office; Blinded Veterans Association; Gold Star Wives of America; and the Hispanic War Veterans of America.